

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 26602 131637Z

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8514

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 26602

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJ: BARRE'S MOOD ON EVE OF US VISIT

1. FORMER STATE DEPARTMENT COUNSELOR, HELMUT SONNENFELDT, CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER BARRE AND ELYSEE SECRETARY GENERAL FRANCOIS-PONCET SEPTEMBER 13. SONNENFELDT, WHO WORKED CLOSELY WITH BARRE IN SETTING UP RAMBOUILLET SUMMIT, GAVE EMBOFF FOLLOWING DEBRIEF.

2. BARRE APPEARS CONFIDENT IN THE EXPECTATION THAT THE MAJORITY WILL WIN THE 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. FRANCOIS-PONCET TOLD SONNENFELDT THAT THE GOF HOPES BARRE VISIT WILL CONVEY IMAGE OF THIS CONFIDENCE TO USG.

3. RE SPECIFICS, PRIME MINISTER TOLD SONNENFELDT THAT IN CURRENT SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST MANEUVERING OVER COMMON PROGRAM, THE PS WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT A FAIR PROPORTION OF THE PCF DEMANDS. THE ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE THE BREAK-UP OF THE LEFT COALITION. SUCH A BREAK-UP WOULD COST THE SOCIALISTS 80 SEATS IN THE 1978 ELECTIONS. THE LOSS WOULD GO IN DISTRICTS WHERE THE PS RELIES ON COMMUNISTS VOTES TO DEFEAT MAJORITY CANDIDATES.

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4. BARRE DESCRIBED THE FRENCH PEOPLE AS BEING TIRED OF BICKERING AMONG POLITICAL PERSONALITIES ON BOTH THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT. FRANCOIS-PONCET BELIEVED THAT BETWEEN THE FIRST TWO ROUNDS IN THE MARCH ELECTIONS THE MAJORITY WILL LOOK MORE CREDIBLE AND THUS PICK UP SUPPORT.

5. FRANCOIS-PONCET PREDICTED THAT AFTER THE MAJORITY VICTORY IN 1978, MITTERRAND'S POLITICAL CAREER WOULD BE FINISHED AND THE PS WILL FRAGMENT WITH MORE CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS JOINING THE GISCARDIENS AND THE MORE LEFT WING ELEMENT GOING TO THE COMMUNISTS.

6. FRANCOIS-PONCET ALSO SAID THAT VGE BELIEVES HIMSELF TO BE VINDICATED FOR HIS BREAK WITH CHIRAC LAST YEAR OVER WHETHER OR NOT EARLY ELECTIONS SHOULD BE CALLED. FRANCOIS-PONCET SAID THAT VGE BELIEVES THAT WITH THE "ECONOMY IMPROVING" AND THE MAJORITY GAINING STRENGTH, THE LEFT WILL BE DEFEATED IN 1978. HAD ELECTIONS BEEN HELD EARLIER AS CHIRAC DEMANDED, THE LEF WOULD HAVE HAD A BETTER CHANCE FOR VICTORY.
HARLAN

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